

Tahoe CEQA lawsuits: Public good or private gain?

By Melissa Siig, Moonshine Ink

When Kila Properties purchased the dilapidated Henrikson building in 2013, the majority of Tahoe City residents and businesses breathed a sigh of relief. The run-down Henrikson building, built in the late 1950s (much of it without permits), today is only partially occupied and serves as an eyesore at a key location – the west gateway to Tahoe City.

Kila Properties' plan to demolish the crumbling building and replace it with the 118-room Tahoe City Lodge, complete with a restaurant, rooftop pool, and bar, met with widespread community support. At the end of 2016, as part of the Tahoe Basin Area Plan, it was unanimously approved by the Placer County Board of Supervisors and the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, and even received the hard-to-come-by endorsement of the League to Save Lake Tahoe. Demolition was set to occur this spring.

And then it all came to a grinding halt.

In January, the Davis-based California Clean Energy Committee (CCEC) filed a lawsuit to stop the implementation of Placer County's Tahoe Basin Area Plan, claiming that the environmental analysis of traffic impacts under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) was inadequate. The lawsuit named the Tahoe City Lodge as a party of interest.

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